

CRIMINAL ACTIONS IN CORONER INQUIRY

**Commissioner Wallstein Halts
Session and Submits Evidence
to the District Attorney.**

PREVENTS IMMUNITY PLEAS

**Important Cases Understood to
Have Been Kept Secret—Physi-
cians Reported to be Involved.**

Commissioner of Accounts Leonard M. Wallstein announced yesterday that he would call on the District Attorney to act in connection with evidence he had obtained in his investigation of the Coroners' office. The public inquiry was terminated abruptly, the Commissioner saying that he did not intend to permit persons he thought should be punished to obtain immunity by testifying.

The Commissioner's statement caused no surprise at the office of the District Attorney. Acting District Attorney James A. Delehanty said that he felt the office was "morally responsible" for the inquiry.

Commissioner Wallstein's formal statement was as follows:

In preparing my report to the Mayor on the present Coroners' system in New York City I shall carefully examine all the evidence taken in both public and executive hearings. As soon as my report is filed with the Mayor I shall hand over to the District Attorney such material in my possession as indicates the commission of a crime. I have evidence indicating that crimes have been committed, and I feel it my duty to put this material in the possession of the District Attorney.

Counterparts of some of the cases mentioned in the public hearings have not yet been presented. There is a possibility that the examination of witnesses before me as to such cases would result in immunity to the guilty persons. With the purpose of avoiding even that possibility I have up to now withheld examination of persons who are possibly criminally involved in the cases which I have reserved.

Commissioner Wallstein would not go into detail about the cases in which he alleged grounds for criminal action had been found. It was understood, however, that some of the cases involved physicians believed to be guilty of criminal practice, who escaped punish-

ment. The number of cases in which convictions have been caused is remarkably low.

The charge has been made by the Commissioner that he has heard that physicians attached to the Coroners' office were guilty of attempting to extort money from insurance companies. It is understood also that there were a few cases of much importance and public interest which Mr. Wallstein, after careful investigation, decided not to bring out at his inquiry. Evidence which he obtained in such cases, it is understood, was of a rather startling nature.

Commissioner Wallstein had intended to call Dr. Otto H. Schultze, a Coroner's physician, as a witness yesterday, but so much new information came to his attention that he decided to end the proceeding for the time. He said he would at once get to work on his report to the Mayor which he would have ready by Jan. 1. He issued a statement as follows:

The investigation into the Coroner's office in New York City has not been closed. I am at this time merely suspending the public hearing sessions, subject to their resumption at such time as may be advisable.

In suspending the hearings at this time, I desire to express my sincere thanks to the press for its very valuable co-operation in connection with this inquiry. Its aid in making known to the public the facts which the investigation has found will be most helpful in bringing about such improvement as may be accomplished.

The investigation, moreover, could not have been as productive of important information without the consent co-operation of the staff of this office, and without the helpful aid and advice of Mr. Robert S. Binkerd, Secretary of the City Club; Mr. H. S. Gilbertson, Secretary of the Short Ballot Organization; Dr. Charles Norris, Director of Laboratories, Bellevue Hospital; Dr. Douglas Symmers, Professor of Pathology at Bellevue Medical College; Dr. Haven Emerson, Deputy Commissioner of the Health Department; Dr. Horst Oertel, lecturer on pathology at McGill University, and the members of the Homicide Bureau of the District Attorney's office.

The private hearings would be continued, the Commissioner said, and further effort be made to obtain evidence which might make possible prosecutions. He has taken 4,500 pages of testimony from 200 witnesses in private, and 1,400 pages from twenty witnesses in public.

Dr. Albert F. Weston, who was accused at a public hearing of accepting a gift of \$100 from the family of the late Charles Lee Bowler, a Christian Scientist, in return for which he permitted the body to be buried without autopsy, was at the District Attorney's office two days after the testimony in that case was taken. Acting District Attorney Delehanty said that Dr. Weston told him he wished to bring a charge of perjury against Robert A. Bowler, a son of the dead man, who swore that he gave the physician the money. Mr. Delehanty told him to submit a full statement to him. Dr. Weston, he said, had not returned. The physician was at the Criminal Courts Building yesterday, but did not see Mr. Delehanty.